

# **Video Remote Interpretation**

Harnessing the Intricacies of Human  
Interaction through Technology



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**A Telelanguage Whitepaper**



## What is Video Remote Interpretation (VRI)?

Video Remote Interpretation, or VRI for short, is a technological platform that allows for language interpretation over video – typically done from a smart phone, computer or tablet. This is done through a remote or offsite interpreter, to communicate with persons with whom there is a communication barrier. VRI is a relatively new language interpretation solution, appearing on the heels of video chat apps such as Skype and Facetime. While some real-time foreign language interpretations can be conducted over the phone, VRI adds a visual element to the interpretation session. Being able to visualize an interpreter adds a level of human interaction which enhances the experience. For some languages, such as American Sign Language, video remote interpretation is the only way to assist in interpreting aside from being on-site and in person.



## THE IMPORTANCE OF VISUAL CUES WHEN INTERPRETING

It's one thing to interpret words; it's another thing to know that those words were understood. Video remote interpretation services make it possible to:

- Visual support with enhanced accuracy for the most common languages and American Sign Language (ASL)
- See facial expressions of the interpreter and know they understood what was said
- Confirm the meaning of non-verbal communication
- Help the conversation for you, your interpreter and your non-English speaking client

## HOW IT WORKS

In a typical VRI situation, the two parties are located together at one location with a videophone or web camera, and a television or computer screen. The interpreter works from another location—either an office or call center—also using a videophone or web camera and television or computer screen. The equipment must provide video and audio connectivity, or a separate telephone line can be used for audio. The video interpreter facilitates communication between the participants who are located together at the other site. In the case of Sign Language interpretation, the interpreter hears the voices of the hearing people through the microphone or telephone, and renders the message into sign language, via a video camera, which the deaf person views on his or her video display. In turn, when the deaf participants sign to the camera, interpreters view it from their screen, and speaks the aural interpretation into a microphone or telephone for the hearing people.

VRI can be a perfect solution for many industries and applications. From healthcare to legal, business to education, 911 to government, and more, VRI provides a unique opportunity to connect your clients and community. Language service providers are transforming the interpretation world with video remote interpretation, filling the gap between over-the-phone and on-site interpretation services.

Conventional on-site interpreting typically requires at least a two-hour minimum charge and possibly mileage and travel charges. Video Remote Interpretation allows for real-time, often on-demand, interpretation – typically at a lower rate to users.

Typically, VRI software is simple to install on your existing devices provided they meet basic technical requirements. The VRI service runs on your existing network whether it be WiFi or 4gLTE. While most VRI is safe and secure, it is recommended to confirm the vendor utilizes AES Data Encryption.



## WHY IT'S SO IMPORTANT

Despite its relatively recent introduction, VRI is proving to be a crucial tool in facilitating communication between those who ordinarily could not converse. For unplanned or emergency interactions, many organizations recognize significant benefits with the instant support provided by videotelephony. Face-to-face interpreting support is a much more personal method of advocacy, however such an interpreter needs to be scheduled in advance and is subject to travel (and associated) delays, also costing more than any other method.

One popular application is in the hospital emergency room. In this setting, it is essential that patients and caregivers communicate readily with medical personnel, but it may take time for a live interpreter to arrive onsite. Hospitals with VRI capability can connect with a remote interpreter quickly and conduct triage and intake surveys with the patient or caregiver without significant delay. Also, employees who work in office settings are increasingly converting to VRI services to accommodate brief interactions or regular meetings which would be difficult to schedule with an onsite interpreter. Schools and business located in areas not adequately served by existing community interpreters can also benefit from increased access to professional interpreters and save the expense of vendor travel reimbursements.

## FINDING THE RIGHT PROVIDER

Surprisingly – or maybe not surprisingly – there are countless vendors in the United States alone that can provide video remote interpretation services. One may be referred by word of mouth, but there are other ways to find a professional and experienced service provider.

- First, make sure their interpreters are certified. There are various national certifying agencies, and many of the top providers have their own certification processes and standards. In addition, ask about a company's policy on background checks for its interpreters.
- Second, ask for references – in a specific industry, or similar in scope.
- Third, ask about years in business, or financial stability (independent audit documents, tax returns, etc.).
- Finally, ask what the company charges for. Several of the top language service providers offer free training, free print collateral to help staff use the services, free account management, and much more. Some providers will even offer free trial periods for clients to test out VRI services.

Overall, video remote interpreting can be an intimidating proposition at first from a technical aspect. In reality, it is an easily implemented component to a well-rounded interpretation solution. **Learn more:** <https://telelanguage.com/services/video-remote-interpretation/>